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## **News Release**

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### **Eagan couple indicted for document trafficking, conspiracy to commit a crime against the U.S.**

An Eagan couple was indicted this week by a federal grand jury in connection with a scheme to steal others' identities for the purpose of fraudulently obtaining money and prescription drugs.

Eric Christopher Thorsen, 25, and Amy Ruth Bergquist, 30, were both charged April 22 in Minneapolis with one count of conspiracy to commit a crime against the United States, one count of document trafficking and one count of aggravated identity theft. The targeted victims were people the two met on the Internet. Both Thorsen and Bergquist made their initial appearances in federal court today.

Their indictment alleges that from August 2007 through March 9, 2008, Bergquist and Thorsen did knowingly and willfully conspire with each other to commit several offenses against the U.S. Those offenses are: 1) knowingly possessing with intent to use unlawfully five or more identification documents which were not issued to the defendants for their use; 2) knowingly possessing and using, without lawful authority, the identification of another person with intent to commit an unlawful act; and 3) knowingly stealing and taking mail from a mailbox.

Thorsen and Bergquist allegedly placed advertisements on the Internet seeking to meet other adults to engage in sexual acts, and would meet those who responded to the ads in either a hotel room or a private residence. The indictment alleges that while Thorsen and Bergquist were inside one of these locations they would steal, among other items, an identification document of one of the other adults.

The indictment also alleges that Thorsen and Bergquist would use the stolen documents to fraudulently obtain money and other items, including prescription drugs, as well as steal mail from the victims' home mailboxes in order to obtain personal checks and other identifier information.

More specifically, the indictment highlights several dates when Thorsen and Bergquist allegedly stole identification documents. On Aug. 13, 2007, they stole a victim's driver's license and bank debit card, and allegedly used the card to make purchases at a Bloomington grocery store.

On Sept. 12, 2007, they allegedly used a counterfeit check to paid for two forged prescriptions for Adderall and Dexedrine in the name of another victim. Also on Sept. 12, they allegedly purchased merchandise at a Roseville store using fraudulent checks in the name of two victims. On Sept. 16, they allegedly purchased medical items from a St. Paul store using a counterfeit check in the name of two victims.

On Sept. 18, they allegedly cashed a counterfeit check in the name of another victim at a Richfield grocery store, and cashed another counterfeit check in that victim's name at a Roseville store on Sept. 24. On March 9, 2008, they allegedly cashed a stolen check at a Minnesota casino and obtained cash from the same casino using a victim's stolen bank credit card.

The indictment alleges that on Sept. 29, 2007, the defendants knowingly possessed five or more identification documents, including the driver's licenses of three Minnesota victims and one Massachusetts victim, as well as the birth certificate of a fifth victim.

If convicted, Thorsen and Bergquist each face a maximum penalty of five years in prison on the conspiracy count, five years on the document trafficking count and two years on the identity theft count. All sentences are determined by a federal district court judge.

This case is the result of an investigation by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the U.S. Secret Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Minnesota Financial Crimes Task Force, the Roseville Police Department, with assistance from other local law enforcement. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Erica H. MacDonald and Kimberly A. Svendsen.

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An indictment is a determination by a grand jury that there is probable cause to believe that offenses have been committed by the defendant. The defendant, of course, is presumed innocent until he or she pleads guilty or is proven guilty at trial.